

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Psyc 231 sec 004, Fall 2006

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David King 2018

Office phone: (703) 993-1349

Office Hour: Weds. 3:15-4:15 pm
and by appointment

Tuesday & Thursday

1:30-2:45pm

Lecture Hall 3

3 credits

Required Text:

Baron, R.A., Byrne, D., & Branscombe, N. (2005). *Social Psychology*. (11th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Prerequisite & Add/Drop deadlines:

PSYC 100 or permission of instructor

Last day to add - September 12th

Last day to drop - September 29th

Course Objectives:

- Students will become familiar with the field of social psychology.
- Students will become familiar with topics of interest to social psychologists, including attitudes, prejudice and discrimination, attraction, relationships, and aggressive behavior.
- Students will be actively involved in applying the concepts covered in class to real-world issues.

Grading and Other Policies:

There will be three multiple choice exams for this course. Exam one (**Tuesday September 26**), worth 20% of the overall grade, will cover Chapters 1-4 of the Baron text. Exam two (**Tuesday October 31**), also worth 20% of the overall grade, will cover Chapters 5-8 of the Baron text. A final exam (**Thursday December 7**), worth 35% of the overall grade, will cover Chapters 9-12 of the Baron text, applications of social psychology to law, as well as major topics from the first two exams.

In the event of a family emergency or illness, a make-up exam must be completed within one week of the original exam date. Allowances for make-up exams will be determined on a case by case basis and the instructor reserves the right to change the format of a make-up exam from multiple choice to essay exam.

Application Assignments:

25% of total class grade

Instructions: There will be *ELEVEN* Application Assignments in this course. Each Application Assignment should be 500-700 words long (or approximately 2 pages double spaced). Each page must include: your name, the date, the number of the application assignment, and a page number. All terms that you incorporate from the chapter should be *italicized*.

Grading: Each Application Assignment is worth a total of 10 points. Application Assignments will constitute 25% of your overall course grade. Because you are only required to turn in 10 of the 11 Application Assignments, I will NOT accept late assignments. An assignment is considered late if it is not turned in by the beginning of class on the day that it is due.

One may (a) choose to complete *only* 10 of the 11 assignments; e.g. if you are sick or will be out of town on an assignment due date or (b) choose to complete *all* eleven assignments and then drop your lowest assignment grade.

Assignment 1: *Social Cognition* due Tuesday September 5

Discuss schemas, their influence on memories, and how they may lead to self-fulfilling prophecies.

Assignment 2: *Social Perception* due Tuesday September 12

Some people strongly believe in the existence and efficacy of "women's intuition". According to social psychological research, are women better at understanding social situations than men? Why, or why not? Can you provide examples from your own life in support of or against "women's intuition"?

Assignment 3: *Attitudes* due Tuesday September 18

Having read Ventura's (1998) article "Don't Even Think about It!" on taboos and attitudes, please address the following:

- Name two current taboos that you do not believe will be considered taboos 20 years from now.
- Given your knowledge of attitudes (how they are formed, what functions they serve, how they may be persuaded) what, in your opinion, will it take to eliminate each of these taboos?
- Lastly, discuss any positive versus negative effects of eliminating these taboos.

Assignment 4: *The Self* due Tuesday October 3

There is considerable evidence demonstrating that how we think about (and feel about) ourselves depends on the type of evaluation we use. Compare and contrast the *self-evaluation maintenance model* with *social identity theory*. Using your own life as an example, provide instances when these two social comparison strategies have yielded different outcomes for how you have perceived yourself.

Assignment 5: *Prejudice* due Thursday October 12

Imagine that you have been chosen to design a campaign to eradicate prejudice against a stigmatized minority (of your choice). Describe *three* techniques that you would use in your campaign to reduce or eliminate prejudice. Which of the three techniques that you mentioned would you suspect to have the *greatest* impact in prejudice reduction? Explain.

Assignment 6: *Interpersonal Attraction* due Thursday October 19

Explain the effect of proximity on interpersonal attraction. Having outlined the role of proximity, now consider the increasing role of new technologies in creating or maintaining social relationships. What type of effect, if any, do you think that the Internet, cell phones, e-mail, instant messaging and web cams for example, will have on proximity as it relates to interpersonal attraction?

Assignment 7: *Close Relationships* due Thursday October 26

Social psychologists would argue that couples who decide *not* to have children face a certain amount of social disapproval, despite the fact that “parenthood is often associated with a decline in marital satisfaction.” Given what you know about social psychology so far, discuss the ways in which couples might be pressured by their social environment to have children. Also, do you believe that social disapproval of childlessness will increase, stay the same, or decline in your lifetime? Why?

Assignment 8: *Social Influence* Tuesday November 7

Discuss *three* factors that are associated with resistance to conformity pressures. Also, describe a time in your own life when you may have felt pressure to conform but chose not to. What was your reason for not conforming? What resistance to conformity technique did you use?

Assignment 9: *Prosocial Behavior* due Tuesday November 14

In your own words, what are the *five* crucial steps people go through in deciding whether or not to offer help? Describe a time when you used—or could have used—these five steps to determine your role in an emergency situation. How were you able (or unable) to determine the information needed to proceed through each of the five steps?

Assignment 10: *Group & Individuals* due Tuesday November 21

Describe some of the factors involved with a group's cohesiveness. Explain how these factors have influenced your decision to remain (or not to remain) in a group in which you are (or have been) a member.

Assignment 11: *Social Psychology and the Legal System* due Thursday November 30

Psychologists have often been called on to serve as expert witnesses in criminal trials. They have used research on deindividuation, repressed memory, and rape-trauma syndrome, for example, to defend their position. Recently, this practice has come under sharp criticism by the legal community. What arguments for and against the use of psychology in the courtroom would you make? Also, provide an example of a situation in which psychology might be able to contribute valuable insight into a case.

	TOPIC	READINGS *	ASSIGNMENTS
29-Aug	The Field of Social Psychology	pp 6-19; pp 34-36	
31-Aug	Social Cognition	pp 42-60	
5-Sep	Social Cognition	pp 61-78	Assignment 1 due
7-Sep	Social Perception	pp 83-104	
12-Sep	Social Perception	pp 105-121	Assignment 2 due
14-Sep	Attitudes	pp 124-136	
18-Sep	Attitudes	pp 137- 144; Michael Ventura article "Don't Even Think about It!"	Assignment 3 due
21-Sep	Attitudes and Exam Review	pp 145-165	
26-Sep	EXAM 1		

28-Sep	The Self	pp 170-189	
3-Oct	The Self	pp 190-205	Assignment 4 due
5-Oct	Prejudice	pp 211-225	
10-Oct	CLASS DOES NOT MEET		
12-Oct	Prejudice	pp 226-241	Assignment 5 due
17-Oct	Prejudice	pp 242-252	
19-Oct	Interpersonal Attraction	pp 258-259; 267-273; 280-288	Assignment 6 due
24-Oct	Close Relationships	pp 321-331	
26-Oct	Close Relationships and Exam Review	no readings due	Assignment 7 due
31-Oct	EXAM 2		
2-Nov	Social Influence	pp 339-350	
7-Nov	Social Influence	pp 350-372	Assignment 8 due
9-Nov	Prosocial Behavior	pp 379-404	
14-Nov	Prosocial Behavior & Aggression	pp 404-413; 419-424	Assignment 9 due
16-Nov	Aggression	pp 425-454	
21-Nov	Group and Individuals	pp 461-481	Assignment 10 due
23-Nov	CLASS DOES NOT MEET		
28-Nov	Group and Individuals	pp 481-498	
30-Nov	Social Psyc and the Legal System	pp 503-519	Assignment 11 due
5-Dec	Gergen Debate and Exam Review	Gergan article "Social Psychology as History"	
7-Dec	EXAM 3		
14-Dec	Final Date- Class does Not Meet		

* All readings are due before class on the date that they are assigned. Example: pp 42-60 should be completed before lecture on August 31.

Honor Code:

All students are expected to abide by the George Mason University honor code:

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work. Further information can be found at <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/unilife/honorcode.html>

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC office.